





The figure that you here see put
Was for H. Buxton Forman cut,
Amid his household gods to bide
And relics culled from far and wide.
This book is his on whom you look:
For Scott his graving tackle took

And etched the man to watch therein.
That none by guile the book might win.
Then sieste fur! of great and small
The world holds books enough for all.
Of roughly handling this beware;
And put it in its place with care.

CASE



The Author of this Book was
Samuel Rogers, Esq. (my
late Banker,) who died
1835.

W. W. Mack

FR5234

1822
VI

✓ HBT
6678

This is the first edition &
is extremely scarce. In the
issue of 1823 Rogers says
"A few copies of the Poem were
printed off in the Autumn
of the year before last, while
the Author was abroad. They
seem to have been dated
ahead, according to custom."

ITALY.

LONDON :
Printed by A. & R. Spottiswoode,
New-Street-Square.

[Rogers, Samuel]

ITALY,

A

POEM.

Part the First.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR

LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN,

PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1822.



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CASE



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I.

THE LAKE OF GENEVA.

DAY glimmered, and to Italy I went;
Thy gates, Geneva, swinging heavily,
Thy gates so slow to open, swift to shut;
As on that Sabbath-eve to young Rousseau ^a,
When in his anguish — but a step too late —
He sate him down and wept — wept till the morning;
Then rose to go — a wanderer thro' the world.

Day glimmered and I went, a gentle breeze
Ruffling the waters of the Lemman lake ;
And soon a passage-boat came sweeping by,
Laden with farmers-wives and fruits and flowers,
And many a chanticleer and partlet caged
For Vevay's market-place — a motley group
Seen thro' the silvery haze. But soon 'twas gone.
The shifting sail flapped idly for an instant,
Then bore them off.

I am not one of those
So dead to all things in this visible world,
So wondrously profound — as to move on
In the sweet light of heaven, like him of old
(His name is justly in the Calendar)

Who thro' the day pursued this pleasant path
That winds beside the mirror of all beauty °,
And, when at length he heard his fellow-pilgrims
Discoursing of the lake, asked where it was.
They marvelled, as they might; and so must all,
Seeing what now I saw; for now 'twas day,
And the bright Sun was in the firmament,
A thousand shadows of a thousand hues
Chequering the clear expanse. Awhile his Orb
Hung o'er thy trackless fields of snow, Mont Blanc,
Thy seas of ice and ice-built promontories,
That change their shapes for ever as in sport;
Then travelled onward and went down behind
The pine-clad heights of Jura, lighting up
The woodman's casement, and perchance his axe

Borne homeward thro' the forest in his hand ;
And, in some deep and melancholy glen,
That dungeon-fortress never to be named,
Where, like a lion taken in the toils,
Toussaint breathed out his brave and generous spirit.
Ah, little did He think, who sent him there,
That he himself, then greatest among men,
Should in like manner be so soon conveyed
Across the ocean — to a rock so small^d
Amid the countless multitude of waves,
That ships have gone and sought it, and returned,
Saying it was not !

Still along the shore,
Among the trees I went for many a mile,

Where damsels sit and weave their fishing-nets,
Singing some national song by the way-side.
But now 'twas dusk ; and, journeying by the Rhone,
That there came down, a torrent from the Alps,
I entered where a key unlocks a kingdom^e,
The mountains closing, and the road, the river
Filling the narrow passage. There I slept.

1870

My dear Mr. [Name] I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst. and in reply to inform you that the same has been forwarded to the proper authorities for their consideration. I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Yours truly,
[Signature]

[Faint, illegible text continues in several paragraphs, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the page.]

II.

THE GREAT ST. BERNARD.

NIGHT was again descending, when my mule,
That all day long had climbed among the clouds,
Stopped, to our mutual joy, at that low door
So near the summit of the Great St. Bernard ;
That door which ever on its hinges moved
To them that knocked, and nightly sends abroad
Ministering spirits. Lying on the watch,
Two dogs of grave demeanour welcomed me f;

And a lay-brother of the Hospital,
Who, as we toiled below, had heard by fits
The distant echoes gaining on his ear,
Came and held fast my stirrup in his hand,
While I alighted.

Long could I have stood,
With a religious awe contemplating
That House, the highest in the Ancient World,
And placed there for the noblest purposes.
'Twas a rude pile of simplest masonry,
With narrow windows and vast buttresses,
Built to endure the shocks of Time and Chance;
Yet shewing many a rent, as well it might,
Warred on for ever by the elements,

And in an evil day, nor long ago,
By violent men — when on the mountain-top
The French and Austrian banners met in conflict.

On the same rock beside it stood the church,
Reft of its cross, not of its sanctity ;
The vesper-bell, for 'twas the vesper-hour,
Duly proclaiming thro' the wilderness,
“ All ye who hear, whatever be your work,
Stop for an instant — move your lips in prayer !”
And, just beneath it, in that dreary dale,
If dale it might be called, so near to Heaven,
A little lake, where never fish leaped up,
Lay like a spot of ink amid the snow ;
A star, the only one in that small sky,

On its dead surface glimmering. 'Twas a scene
Resembling nothing I had left behind,
As tho' all worldly ties were now dissolved ; —
And, to incline the mind still more to thought,
To thought and sadness, on the eastern shore
Under a beetling cliff stood half in shadow
A lonely chapel destined for the dead,
For such as having wandered from their way,
Had perished miserably. Side by side,
Within they lie, a mournful company,
All in their shrouds, no earth to cover them ;
Their features full of life yet motionless
In the broad day, nor soon to suffer change,
Tho' the barred windows, barred against the wolf,
Are always open !

But the *Bise* s blew cold ;
And, bidden to a spare but cheerful meal,
I sate among the holy brother-hood
At their long board. The fare indeed was such
As is prescribed on days of abstinence,
But might have pleased a nicer taste than mine,
And thro' the floor came up ; an ancient matron
Serving unseen below ; while from the roof
(The roof, the floor, the walls of native fir,)
A lamp hung flickering, such as loves to fling
Its partial light on Apostolic heads,
And sheds a grace on all. Theirs Time as yet
Had changed not. Some were almost in the prime ;
Nor was a brow o'ercast. Seen as I saw them,
Ranged round their hearth-stone in a leisure-hour,

They were a simple and a merry race,
Mingling small games of chance with social converse,
And gathering news from all who came that way,
As of some other world. But when the storm
Rose, and the snow rolled on in ocean-billows,
When on his face the experienced traveller fell,
Sheltering his lips and nostrils with his hands,
Then all at once was changed, and sallying forth
Into that blank of nature, they became
Unearthly beings. “Anselm, higher up
The dog howls loud and long, and now, observe,
Digs with his feet how eagerly ! A man,
Dying or dead, lies buried underneath !
Let us to work ! there is no time to lose ! —
But who descends Mont Velan ? 'Tis La Croix.

Away, away ! if not, alas, too late.

Homeward he drags an old man and a boy,

Faltering and falling, and but half awakened,

Asking to sleep again." Such their discourse.

1870

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III.

THE DESCENT.

My mule refreshed — and, let the truth be told,
He was not of that vile and scurvy race
In every age lovers of controversy,
But patient, diligent and sure of foot,
Shunning the loose stone on the precipice,
Snorting suspicion while with sight, smell, touch,
Examining the wet and spongy moss,

And on his haunches sitting to slide down
The steep, the smooth — my mule refreshed, his bells
Gingled once more — the signal to depart,
And we set out in the grey light of dawn,
Descending rapidly — by waterfalls
Fast-frozen, and among huge blocks of ice
That in their long career had stopt mid-way.
At length, unchecked, unbidden, he stood still;
And all his bells were muffled. Then my Guide,
Lowering his voice, addressed me: “ Through this
Chasm
On and say nothing — for a word, a breath,
Stirring the air, may loosen and bring down
A winter’s snow — enough to overwhelm

The horse and foot that, night and day, defiled
Along this path to conquer at Marengo.
Well I remember how I met them here,
As the light died away, and how Napoleon,
Wrapt in his cloak — I could not be deceived —
Reined in his horse, and asked me, as I passed,
How far 'twas to St. Remi. Where the rock
Juts forwards, and the road, crumbling away,
Narrows almost to nothing at its base,
'Twas there; and down along the brink he led
To Victory! — Desaix, who turned the scale,
Leaving his life-blood in that famous field,
(When the clouds break, we may discern the spot
In the blue haze,) sleeps, as thou saw'st at dawn,

Near the high altar in the Hospital-church."

So saying, for awhile he held his peace,

Awe-struck beneath that dreadful Canopy ;

But soon, the danger passed, launched forth again.

IV.

JORASSE.

JORASSE was in his three-and-twentieth year ;
Graceful and active as a stag just roused ;
Gentle withal, and pleasant in his speech,
Yet seldom seen to smile. He had grown up
Among the Hunters of the Higher Alps ;
Had caught their starts and fits of thoughtfulness,
Their haggard looks, and strange soliloquies,
Said to arise by those who dwell below,

From frequent dealings with the Mountain-Spirits.
But other ways had taught him better things ;
And now he numbered, marching by my side,
The Savans, Princes, who with him had crossed
The icy tract, with him familiarly
Through the rough day and rougher night conversed
In many a chalêt round the Peak of Terror^h,
Round Tacul, Tour, Well-horn and Rosenlau ;
Save when an Avalanche, at distance rolling
Its long, long thunders, held them mute with fear.
— But with what transport he recalled the hour
When to deserve, to win his blooming bride,
Madelaine of Annecy, to his feet he bound
The iron crampons, and, ascending, trod
The Upper Realms of Frost ; then, by a cord

Let half-way down, entered a Grot star-bright,
And gathered from above, below, around,
The pointed crystals !

Once, nor long before,
(Thus did his tongue run on, fast as his feet,
And with an eloquence that Nature gives
To all her children — breaking off by starts
Into the harsh and rude, oft as the Mule
Drew his displeasure,) once, nor long beforeⁱ,
Alone at day-break on the Mettenberg,
He slipped, he fell ; and, through a fearful cleft
Gliding from ledge to ledge, from deep to deeper,
Went to the Under-world ! Long-while he lay
Upon his rugged bed — then waked like one

Wishing to sleep again and sleep for ever !
For looking round, he saw or thought he saw
Innumerable branches of a Cavern,
Winding beneath that solid Crust of Ice ;
With here and there a rent that shewed the stars !
What then, alas, was left him but to die ?
What else in those immeasurable chambers,
Strewn with the bones of miserable men
Lost like himself ? Yet must he wander on,
Till cold and hunger set his spirit free !
And, rising, he began his dreary round ;
When hark, the noise as of some mighty River
Working its way to light ! Back he withdrew,
But soon returned, and, fearless from despair,
Dashed down the dismal Channel ; and all day,

If day could be where utter darkness was,
Travelled incessantly, the craggy roof
Just over-head, and the impetuous waves,
Nor broad nor deep, yet with a giant's strength
Lashing him on. At last the water slept
In a dead lake — at the third step he took
Unfathomable — and the roof, that long
Had threatened, suddenly descending, lay
Flat on the surface. Statue-like he stood,
His journey ended; when a ray divine
Shot thro' his soul. Breathing a prayer to Her
Whose ears are never shut, the Blessed Virgin,
He plunged, he swam — and in an instant rose,
The barrier past, in light, in sunshine! Thro'
A smiling valley, full of cottages,

Glittering the river ran ; and on the bank
The Young were dancing ('twas a festival-day)
All in their best attire. There first he saw
His Madelaine. In the crowd she stood to hear,
When all drew round, inquiring ; and her face,
Seen behind all, and, varying, as he spoke,
With hope, and fear, and generous sympathy,
Subdued him. From that very hour he loved.

The tale was long, but coming to a close,
When his dark eyes flashed fire, and, stopping short,
He listened and looked up. I looked up too ;
And twice there came a hiss that thro' me thrilled !
'Twas heard no more. A Chamois on the cliff

Had roused his fellows with that cry of fear,

And all were gone.

But now the thread was broken ;

Love and its joys had vanished from his mind ;

And he recounted his hair-breadth escapes,

When with his friend, Hubert of Bionnay,

(His ancient carbine from his shoulder slung,

His axe to hew a stair-case in the ice)

He tracked their footsteps. By a cloud surprised,

Upon a crag among the precipices,

Where the next step had hurled them fifty fathoms,

Oft had they stood, locked in each other's arms,

All the long night under a freezing sky,

Each guarding each the while from sleeping, falling.

Oh, 'twas a sport he loved dearer than life,
And only would with life itself relinquish !
“ My sire, my grandsire died among these wilds,
My brother too ! As for myself,” he cried,
And he held out his wallet in his hand,
“ This do I call my winding-sheet, so sure
Am I to have no other !”

And his words
Were soon fulfilled. Within a little month
Jorasse slept soundly half-way up the Jung-frau.
Long did his wife, suckling her babe, look out
The way he went at parting, but he came not !
Long fear to close her eyes, lest in her sleep
(Such their belief) he should appear before her,

Frozen and ghastly pale, or crushed and bleeding,
To tell her where he lay, and supplicate
For the last rite! At length the dismal news
Came to her ears, and to her eyes his corse.

V.

MARGARET DE TOURS.

Now the grey granite, starting thro' the snow,
Discovered many a variegated moss^k
That to the pilgrim resting on his staff
Shadows out capes and islands; and ere long
Numberless flowers, such as disdain to live
In lower regions, and delighted drink
The clouds before they fall, flowers of all hues,
With their diminutive leaves covered the ground.

'Twas then, that turning by an ancient larch
Shivered in two yet most majestic
With its long level branches, we observed
A human figure sitting on a stone
Far down by the way-side—just where the rock
Is riven asunder, and the Evil One
Has bridged the gulf, a wondrous monument¹
Built in one night, from which the flood beneath,
Raging along, all foam, is seen not heard,
And seen as motionless !

Nearer we drew,
And 'twas a woman young and delicate,
Wrapt in a russet cloak from head to foot,
Her eyes cast down, her cheek upon her hand,

In deepest thought. Young as she was, she wore
The matron-cap ; and from her shape we judged,
As well we might, that it would not be long
Ere she became a mother. Pale she looked,
Yet cheerful ; tho', methought, once, if not twice
She wiped away a tear that would be coming ;
And in those moments her small hat of straw,
Worn on one side, and garnished with a ribbon
Glittering with gold, but ill concealed a face
Not soon to be forgotten. Rising up
On our approach, she journeyed slowly on ;
And my companion, long before we met,
Knew, and ran down to greet her.

She was born

(Such was her artless tale, told with fresh tears)

In Val d'Aosta ; and an Alpine stream,

Leaping from crag to crag in its short course

To join the Dora, turned her father's mill.

There did she blossom till a Valaisan,

A townsman of Martigny, won her heart,

Much to the old man's grief. Long he held out,

Unwilling to resign her ; and at length,

When the third summer came, they stole a match

And fled. The act was sudden ; and when far

Away, her spirit had misgivings. Then

She pictured to herself that aged face

Sickly and wan, in sorrow, not in anger ;

And, when at last she heard his hour was near,

Went forth unseen, and, burdened as she was,
Crossed the high Alps on foot to ask forgiveness,
And hold him to her heart before he died.
Her task was done. She had fulfilled her wish,
And now was on her way rejoicing, weeping.
A frame like hers had suffered ; but her love
Was strong within her ; and right on she went,
Fearing no ill. May all good Angels guard her !
And should I once again, as once I may,
Visit Martigny, I will not forget
Thy hospitable roof, Margaret De Tours ;
Thy sign the golden sun. Heaven prosper Thee !

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VI.

THE ALPS.

Who first beholds those everlasting clouds,
Seed-time and harvest, morning, noon and night,
Still where they were, steadfast, immovable;
Who first beholds the Alps — that mighty chain
Of Mountains, stretching on from east to west,
So massive, yet so shadowy, so ethereal,
As to belong rather to Heaven than Earth —
But instantly receives into his soul

A sense, a feeling that he loses not,
A something that informs him 'tis a moment
Whence he may date henceforward and for ever?

To me they seemed the barriers of a World,
Saying, Thus far, no farther ! and as o'er
The level plain I travelled silently,
Nearing them more and more, day after day,
My wandering thoughts my only company,
And they before me still, oft as I looked,
A strange delight, mingled with fear, came o'er me,
A wonder as at things I had not heard of !
Oft as I looked, I felt as though I saw them
For the first time !

Great was the tumult there,
Deafening the din, when in barbaric pomp
The Carthaginian on his march to Rome
Entered their fastnesses. Trampling the snows,
The war-horse reared; and the towered elephant
Upturned his trunk into the murky sky,
Then tumbled headlong, swallowed up and lost,
He and his rider.

Now the scene is changed;
And o'er Mont Cenis, o'er the Simplon winds
A path of pleasure. Like a silver zone
Flung about carelessly, it shines afar,
Catching the eye in many a broken link,
In many a turn and traverse as it glides;

And oft above and oft below appears,
Seen o'er the wall by him who journies up,
As though it were another, not the same,
Leading along he knows not whence or whither.
Yet thro' its fairy-course, go where it will,
The torrent stops it not, the rugged rock
Opens and lets it in ; and on it runs,
Winning its easy way from clime to clime
Through glens locked up before.

Not such *my* path !
Mine but for those, who, like Jean Jaques delight
In dizziness, gazing and shuddering on
Till fascination comes and the brain turns !
Mine, though I judge but from my ague-fits

Over the Drance, just where the Abbot fell, ^m
The same as Hannibal's.

But now 'tis past,

That turbulent Chaos ; and the promised land
Lies at my feet in all its loveliness !

To him who starts up from a terrible dream,
And lo, the sun is shining, and the lark
Singing aloud for joy, to him is not
Such sudden ravishment as now I feel
At the first glimpses of fair Italy.



VII.

COMO.

I LOVE to sail along the Larian Lake
Under the shore — though not to visit Pliny,
To catch him musing in his plane-tree walk,
Or fishing, as he might be, from his window :
And, to deal plainly, (may his Shade forgive me !)
Could I recall the ages past, and play
The fool with Time, I should perhaps reserve
My leisure for Catullus on *his* Lake,

Though to fare worse, or Virgil at his farm
A little farther on the way to Mantua.
But such things cannot be. So I sit still,
And let the boatman shift his little sail,
His sail so forked and so swallow-like,
Well-pleased with all that comes. The morning-air
Plays on my cheek how gently, flinging round
A silvery gleam: and now the purple mists
Rise like a curtain; now the sun looks out,
Filling, o'erflowing with his glorious light
This noble amphitheatre of mountains;
And now appear as on a phosphor-sea
Numberless barks, from Milan, from Pavia;
Some sailing up, some down, and some at anchor,
Lading, unlading at that small port-town

Under the promontory — its tall tower
And long flat roofs, just such as Poussin drew,
Caught by a sun-beam slanting through a cloud ;
A quay-like scene, glittering and full of life,
And doubled by reflection.

What delight,
After so long a sojourn in the desert,
To hear once more the sounds of cheerful labour !
— But in a clime like this where are they not ?
Along the shores, among the hills 'tis now
The hey-day of the Vintage ; all abroad,
But most the young and of the gentler sex,
Busy in gathering ; all among the vines,
Some on the ladder, and some underneath,

Filling their baskets of green wicker-work,
While many a canzonet and frolic laugh
Come through the leaves; the vines in light festoons
From tree to tree, the trees in avenues,
And every avenue a covered walk
Hung with black clusters. 'Tis enough to make
The sad man merry, the benevolent one
Melt into tears — so general is the joy!
While up and down the cliffs, over the lake,
Wains oxen-drawn, and panniered mules are seen,
Laden with grapes, and dropping rosy wine.

Here I received from thee, Filippo Mori,
One of those courtesies so sweet, so rare!
When, as I rambled through thy vineyard-ground.

On the hill-side, thou sent'st thy little son,
Charged with a bunch almost as big as he,
To press it on the stranger.

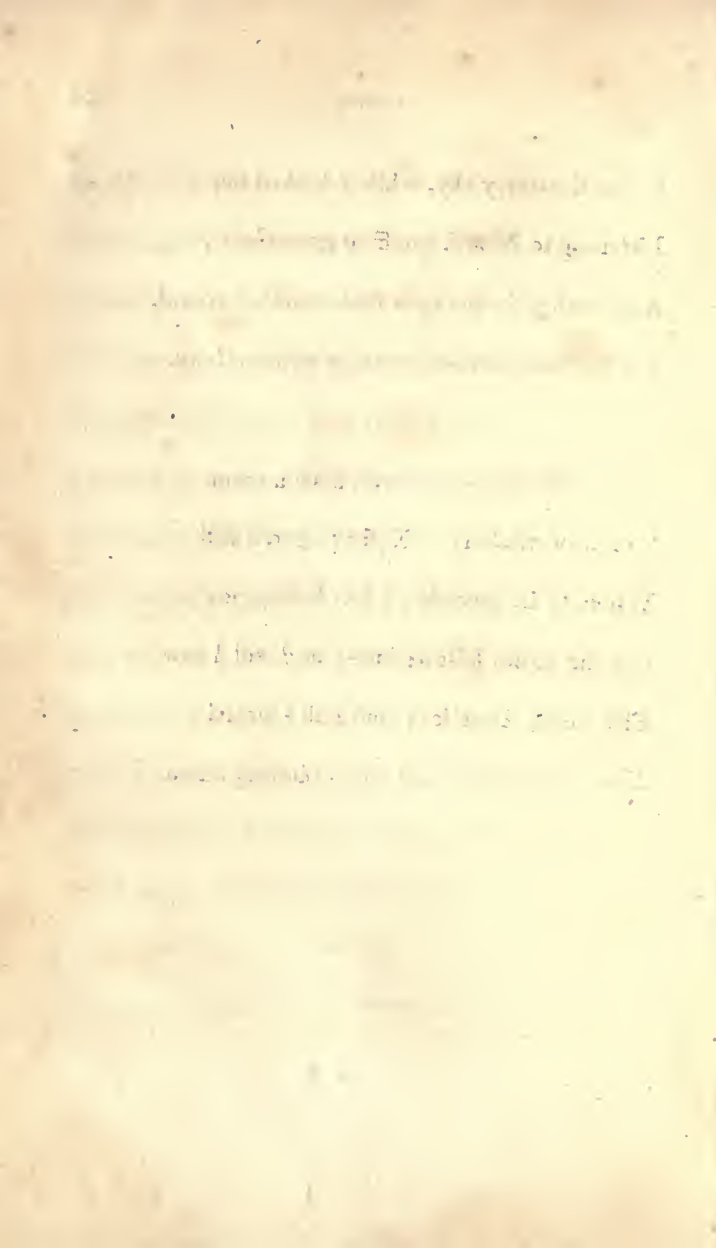
May thy vats
O'erflow, and he, thy willing gift-bearer,
Live to become ere-long himself a giver;
And in due time, when thou art full of honor,
The staff of thine old age !

In a strange land
Such things, however trifling, reach the heart,
And through the heart the head, clearing away
The narrow notions that grow up at home,
And in their place grafting Good-Will to All.

At least I found it so, nor less at eve,
When, bidden as an English traveller,
(’Twas by a little boat that gave me chase
With oar and sail, as homeward-bound I crossed
The bay of Tramezzine,) right readily
I turned my prow and followed, landing soon
Where steps of purest marble met the wave ;
Where, through the trellisses and corridors,
Soft music came as from Armida’s palace,
Breathing enchantment o’er the woods, the waters ;
And through a bright pavilion, bright as day,
Forms such as hers were flitting, lost among
Such as of old in sober pomp swept by,
Such as adorn the triumphs and the feasts.
Painted by Cagliari ⁿ ; where the world danced

Under the starry sky, while I looked on,
Listening to Monti, quaffing gramolata,
And reading in the eyes that sparkled round,
The thousand love-adventures written there.

Can I forget — no never, such a scene
So full of witchery. Night lingered still,
When, lit by lucciole^p, I left Bellaggio;
But the strain followed me; and still I saw
Thy smile, Angelica; and still I heard
Thy voice — once and again bidding adieu.



VIII.

BERGAMO.

THE song was one that I had heard before,
But where I knew not. It inclined to sadness;
And, turning round from the delicious fare
My landlord's little daughter Jessica,
Had from her apron just rolled out before me,
Figs and rock-melons — at the door I saw
Two boys of lively aspect. Peasant-like
They were, and poorly clad, but not unskilled ;

With their small voices and an old guitar
Winning their mazy progress to my heart
In that, the only universal language.
But soon they changed the measure, entering on
A pleasant dialogue of sweet and sour,
A war of words, and waged with looks and gestures,
Between Trappanti and his ancient dame,
Mona Lucilia. To and fro it went ;
While many a titter on the stairs was heard,
And Jessica's among them.

When 'twas done,
Their dark eyes flashed no longer, yet were speaking
More than enough to serve them. Far or near,
Few let them pass unnoticed ; and there was not

A mother round about for many a league
But could repeat their story. Twins they were,
And orphans, as I learnt, cast on the world ;
Their parents lost in the old ferry-boat
That, three years since, last Martinmas, went down
Crossing the rough Benacus. ¹

May they live
Blameless and happy — rich they cannot be,
Like him who, in the days of Minstrelsy ²,
Came in a beggar's weeds to Petrarch's door,
Crying without, " Give me a lay to sing !"
And soon in silk (such then the power of song)
Returned to thank him ; or like him, way-worn
And lost, who, by the foaming Adigè

Descending from the Tyrol, as Night fell,
Knocked at a City-gate near the hill-foot,
The gate that bore so long, sculptured in stone,
An eagle on a ladder^s, and at once
Found welcome — nightly in the bannered hall
Tuning his harp to tales of Chivalry
Before the great Mastino^t, and his guests,
The three-and-twenty, by some adverse fortune,
By war or treason or domestic malice,
Reft of their kingly crowns, reft of their all,
And living on his bounty.

But who now
Enters the chamber, flourishing a scroll
In his right hand, his left at every step

Brushing the floor with what was once a hat
Of ceremony. Gliding on, he comes ;
Slip-shod, ungartered ; his long suit of black
Dingy and thread-bare, though renewed in patches
Till it has almost ceased to be the old one.

“ I am a Poet, Signor : — give me leave
To bid you welcome. Though you shrink from
notice,

The splendour of your name has gone before you ;
And Italy from sea to sea rejoices,
As well indeed she may ! But I transgress.
I too have known the weight of Praise, and ought
To spare another.”

Saying so, he laid
His sonnet, an impromptu, on my table,
(If his, then Petrarch must have stolen it from him)
And bowed and left me ; in his hollow hand
Receiving my small tribute, a zecchino,
Unconsciously, as doctors do their fees.

My omelet, and a flagon of hill-wine,
“ The very best in Bergamo !” had long
Fled from all eyes ; or like the young Gil Blas
De Santillane, I had perhaps been seen
Bartering my bread and salt for empty praise.

IX.

ITALY.

AM I in Italy? Is this the Mincius?

Are those the ancient turrets of Verona?

And shall I sup where Juliet at the Masque

Saw her loved Montague, and now sleeps by him?

Such questions hourly do I ask myself;

And not a finger-post by the road-side

“ To Mantua” — “ To Ferrara” — but excites

Surprise, and doubt, and self-congratulation.

O Italy, how beautiful thou art !

Yet I could weep — for thou art lying, alas,

Low in the dust; and they, who come, admire thee

As we admire the beautiful in death.

Thine was a dangerous gift, the gift of Beauty.

Would thou hadst less, or wert as once thou wast,

Inspiring awe in those who now enslave thee !

— But why despair ? Twice hast thou lived already ;

Twice shone among the nations of the world,

As the sun shines among the lesser lights

Of heaven ; and shalt again. * * * *

X.

VENICE.

No track of men, no foot-steps to and fro,
Led to her gates. The path lay o'er the sea,
Invisible; and from the land we went
As to a floating City — steering in,
And gliding up her streets as in a dream,
So smoothly, silently — by many a dome
Mosque-like, and many a stately portico,
The statues ranged along an azure sky;
By many a pile in more than Eastern splendour,

Of old the residence of merchant-kings ;
The fronts of some, though Time had shattered them,
Still glowing with the richest hues of art, ^u
As though the wealth within them had run o'er.

Thither I came, in the great passage-boat,
From Padua, where the stars are, night by night,
Watched from the top of an old dungeon-tower,
Whence blood ran once, the tower of Ezzelino ^x—
Not as he watched them, when he read his fate
And shuddered. But of him I thought not then,
Him or his horoscope ; far, far from me
The forms of Guilt and Fear ; though some were there,
Sitting among us round the cabin-board,
Some who, like him, had cried, “ Spill blood enough ! ”

And could shake long at shadows. They had played
Their parts at Padua, and were now returning;
A vagrant crew, and careless of to-morrow,
Careless, and full of mirth. Who, in that quaver,
Sings "Caro, Caro!" — 'Tis the Prima Donna,
And to her monkey, smiling in his face.
Who, as transported, cries, "Bravo! Ancora!"
'Tis a grave personage, an old macaw,
Perched on her shoulder. But mark him who leaps
Ashore, and with a shout urges along
The lagging mules; then runs and climbs a tree
That with its branches overhangs the stream,
And, like an acorn, drops on deck again.
'Tis he who speaks not, stirs not, but we laugh;
That child of fun and frolic, Arlecchino.

At length we leave the river for the sea.
At length a voice aloft proclaims "Venezia!"
And, as called forth, it comes. A few in fear,
Flying away from him whose boast it was,
That the grass grew not where his horse had trod,
Gave birth to Venice. Like the water-fowl,
They built their nests among the ocean-waves;
And, where the sands were shifting, as the wind
Blew from the north, the south; where they that came,
Had to make sure the ground they stood upon,
Rose, like an exhalation, from the deep,
A vast metropolis, with glittering spires,
With theatres, basilicas adorned;
A scene of light and glory, a dominion,
That has endured the longest among men.

And whence the talisman, by which she rose,
Towering? 'Twas found there in the barren sea.
Want led to Enterprize; and, far or near,
Who met not the Venetian? — now in Cairo;
Ere yet the Cafilâ came, listening to hear
Its bells approaching from the Red-Sea coast;
Now on the Euxine, on the Sea of Azoph,
In converse with the Persian, with the Russ,
The Tartar; on his lowly deck receiving
Pearls from the gulf of Ormus, gems from Bagdad;
Eyes brighter yet, that shed the light of love,
From Georgia, from Circassia. Wandering round,
When in the rich bazar he saw, displayed,
Treasures from unknown climes, away he went,
And, travelling slowly upward, drew ere-long

From the well-head, supplying all below ;
Making the Imperial City of the East ^{bb},
Herself, his tributary.

If we turn

To the black forests of the Rhine, the Danube,
Where o'er the narrow glen the castle hangs,
And, like the wolf that hungered at his gate,
The baron lived by rapine — there we meet,
In warlike guise, the Caravan from Venice ;
Winning its way with all that can attract,
Cages, whence every wild cry of the desert,
Jugglers, stage-dancers. Well might Charlemain,
And his brave peers, each with his visor up,
On their long lances lean and gaze awhile,

When the Venetian to their eyes disclosed
The wonders of the East ! Well might they then
Sigh for new Conquests !

Thus did Venice rise,
Thus flourish, till the unwelcome tidings came,
That in the Tagus had arrived a fleet
From India, from the region of the Sun,
Fragrant with spices — that a way was found,
A channel opened, and the golden stream
Turned to enrich another. Then she felt
Her strength departing, and at last she fell,
Fell in an instant, blotted out and razed ;
She who had stood yet longer than the longest
Of the Four Kingdoms — who, as in an Ark,

Had floated down, amid a thousand wrecks,
Uninjured, from the Old World to the New,
From the last trace of civilised life — to where
Light shone again, and with unclouded splendour.

Through many an age in the mid-sea She dwelt,
From her retreat calmly contemplating
The changes of the Earth, herself unchanged.
Before her passed, as in an awful dream,
The mightiest of the mighty. What are these,
Clothed in their purple? O'er the globe they fling
Their monstrous shadows; and, while yet we speak,
Phantom-like, vanish with a dreadful scream!
What — but the last that styled themselves the Cesars?
And who in long array (look where they come;

Their gestures menacing so far and wide)
Wear the green turban and the heron's plume?
Who — but the Caliphs? followed fast by shapes
As new and strange — some, men of steel, steel-clad;
Others, nor long, alas, the interval,
In light and gay attire, with brow serene
Wielding Jove's thunder, scattering sulphurous fire
Mingled with darkness; and, among the rest
Lo, one by one, passing continually,
Those who assume a sway beyond them all;
Men grey with age, each in a triple crown,
And in his tremulous hands grasping the keys
That can alone, as he would signify,
Unlock Heaven's gate.



XI.

LUIGI.

HE who is on his travels and loves ease,
Ease and companionship, should hire a lacquey,
Such as thou wert, Luigi. Thee I found,
Playing at MORA on the cabin-roof
With Pulcinella — crying, as in anger,
“ Tre ! Quattro ! Cinque ! ” — and at once engaged,
Won by thy looks. Thou wert an honest lad ;
Wert generous, grateful, not without ambition.

Had it depended on thy will and pleasure,
Thou wouldst have numbered in thy family
At least six Doges and twelve Procurators.^{cc}
But that was not to be. In thee I saw
The last of a long line of Carbonari,
Who in their forest, for three hundred years,
Had lived and laboured, cutting, charring wood ;
Discovering where they were, to those astray,
By the re-echoing stroke, the crash, the fall,
Or the blue wreath that travelled slowly up
Into the sky. Thy nobler destinies
Led thee away to jostle in the crowd ;
And there I found thee — by thy own prescription
Crossing the sea to try once more a change
Of air and diet, landing and as gaily,

Near the Dogana — on the Great Canal,
As tho' thou knewest where to dine and sleep.

First didst thou practise Patience in Bologna,
Serving behind a Cardinal's gouty chair,
Laughing at jests that were no laughing matter;
Then teach the Art to others in Ferrara
— At the Three Moors a guide to Forestieri —
Dealing out largely in exchange for pence
Thy scraps of Knowledge — thro' the grassy street
Leading, explaining — pointing to the bars
Of Tasso's dungeon, and the latin verse,
Graven in the stone, that yet denotes the door
Of Ariosto.

Had I * * 's pencil,
I would pourtray thee to the life, Luigi ;
In our long journey ever by my side,
O'er rough and smooth, o'er apennine, maremma ;
Thy locks jet-black, and clustering round a face
Open as day and full of manly daring.
Thou hadst a hand, a heart for all that came,
Herdsman or pedlar, monk or muleteer ;
And few there were, that met thee not with smiles.
Mishap passed o'er thee like a summer-cloud.
Cares thou hadst none ; and they, who stood to hear
thee,
Caught the infection and forgot their own.
Thou wert in truth all life and gaiety,

And, like a babe, hushed only by thy slumbers ;
Up hill and down, morning and noon and night,
Singing or talking ; singing to thyself
When none gave ear, but to the listener talking.



XII.

ST. MARK'S PLACE.

OVER how many tracts, vast, desolate,
Nothing, from day to day, from year to year,
Passes, save now and then a cloud, a meteor,
A famished eagle ranging for his prey ;
While on this spot of earth, the work of man,
How much has been transacted ! Emperors, Popes,
Warriors, from far and wide, laden with spoil,
Landing, have here performed their several parts,

Then left the stage to others. Not a stone
In the broad pavement, but to him who has
An eye, an ear for the Inanimate World,
Tells of Past Ages.

In that temple-porch,
(The brass is gone, the porphyry remains,)
Did Barbarossa fling his mantle off,
And, kneeling, on his neck receive the foot
Of the proud Pontiff. In that temple-porch,
Old as he was, so near his hundredth year,
And blind — his eyes put out — did Dandolo
Stand forth, displaying on his ducal crown
The cross just then assumed at the high altar.
There did he stand, erect, invincible,

Tho' wan his cheeks, and wet with many tears,
For in his prayers he had been weeping much ;
And now the pilgrims and the people wept
With admiration, saying in their hearts,
“ Surely those aged limbs have need of rest.”
— There did he stand, erect, invincible ;
Ere he set sail, five hundred gallant ships,
Their lofty sides hung with emblazoned shields,
Following his track to Glory. He returned not ;
But of his trophies four arrived ere-long,
Snatched from destruction — the four steeds divine,
That strike the ground, resounding with their feet, ^d
And from their nostrils snort ethereal flame
Over that very portal — in the place
Where in an after-time Petrarch was seen

Sitting beside the Doge, on his right hand,
Amid the ladies of the Court of Venice,
Their beauty shaded from the setting sun
By many-coloured hangings ; while, beneath,
Knights of all nations, some from merry England,
Their lances in the rest, charged for the prize.

The sea, that emblem of uncertainty,
Changed not so fast for many and many an age,
As this small spot. To-day 'twas full of maskers ;
And lo, the madness of the Carnival,
The monk, the nun, the holy legate masqued :
To-morrow came the scaffold and the heads-man ;
And he died there by torch-light, bound and gagged,
Whose name and crime they knew not. Underneath,

Where the Archangel, turning with the wind,
Blesses the City from the topmost-tower,
His arms extended — there continually
Two phantom-shapes were sitting, side by side,
Or up, and, as in sport, chasing each other ;
Horror and Mirth. Both vanished in one hour !
But Ocean only, when again he claims
His ancient rule, shall wash away their footsteps.

Enter the Palace by the marble stairs
Down which the grizzly head of old Faliero
Rolled from the block. ^{ee} Pass onward through the
Chamber,
Where, among all drawn in their ducal robes,
But one is wanting — where, thrown off in heat,

A short inscription on the Doge's chair
Led to another on the wall yet shorter ;
And thou wilt track them — wilt from halls of state,
Where kings have feasted, and the festal song
Rung through the fretted roof, cedar and gold,
Step into darkness ; and be told, “ ’Twas here,
Trusting, deceived, assembled but to die,
To take a long embrace and part again,
Carrara and his valiant sons were strangled ;
He first, — then they, whose only crime had been
Struggling to save their Father. — Thro’ that door,
So soon to cry, smiting his brow, ‘ I’m lost ! ’ ”
Was shewn, and with all courtesy, all honor,
The great and noble captain, Carmagnola. —
That deep descent — thou canst not yet discern

Aught as it is — leads to the dripping vaults
Under the flood — where light and warmth came never !
Leads to a covered Bridge — the Bridge of Sighs,
And to that fatal closet at the foot
Lurking for prey — which, when a victim entered,
Grew less and less, contracting to a span ;
An iron-door, urged onward by a screw,
Forcing out life. But let us to the roof,
And, when thou hast surveyed the sea, the land,
Visit the narrow cells that cluster there,
As 'twere a place of tombs. They had their tenants,
And each supplied with sufferings of his own.
There burning suns beat unrelentingly,
Turning all things to dust, and scorching up
The brain, till Reason fled, and the wild yell,

And wilder laugh, burst out on every side,
Answering each other as in mockery!
Few Houses of the size were better filled;
Though many came and left it in an hour.
Most nights, so said the good old Nicolo,
(For three-and-thirty years his uncle kept
The water-gate below, but seldom spoke,
Though much was on his mind,) most nights arrived
The prison-boat, that boat with many oars,
And bore away to the Canal Orfano,^{ff}
The drowning-place, where never net was thrown
Summer or Winter, death the penalty;
And where a secret, once deposited,
Lay till the waters should give up their dead.

Yet what so gay as Venice? Every gale
Breathed heavenly music! and who flocked not thither
To celebrate her Nuptials with the Sea;
To wear the mask, and mingle in the crowd
With Greek, Armenian, Persian — night and day
(There, and there only, did the hour stand still,)
Pursuing through her thousand labyrinths
The Enchantress Pleasure; realizing dreams
The earliest, happiest — for a tale to catch
Credulous ears, and hold young hearts in chains,
Had only to begin, “There lived in Venice —”
What tho’ a strange, mysterious Power was there,
Moving throughout, subtle, invisible,
And universal as the air they breathed;
A Power that never slumbered, never pardoned,

All eye, all ear, no where and every where,
Entering the closet and the sanctuary,
No place of refuge for the Doge himself,
Most present when least thought of — nothing dropt
In secret, when the heart was on the lips,
Nothing in feverish sleep, but instantly
Observed and judged—a Power, that if but glanced at
In casual converse, be it where it might,
The speaker lowered at once his eyes, his voice,
And pointed upward as to God in Heaven —
What tho' that Power was there, he who lived thus,
Pursuing Pleasure, lived as if it were not.
But let him in the midnight-air indulge
A word, a thought against the laws of Venice,
And in that hour he vanished from the earth !

XIII.

THE BRIDES OF VENICE.

It was St. Mary's Eve^{ss}, and all poured forth
As to some grand solemnity. The fisher
Came from his islet, bringing o'er the waves
His wife and little one; the husbandman
From the Firm Land, along the Po, the Brenta,
Crouding the common ferry. All arrived;
And in his straw the prisoner turned and listened,
So great the stir in Venice. Old and young

Thronged her three hundred bridges ; the grave Turk
In his white turban, and the cozening Jew,
In his red hat and thread-bare gaberdine,
Hurrying along. For, as the custom was,
The noblest sons and daughters of the state,
They of Patrician birth, the Flower of Venice,
Whose names are written in the Book of Gold,
Were on that day to solemnize their nuptials.

At noon a distant murmur through the croud,
Rising and rolling on, announced their coming ;
And never from the first was to be seen
Such splendour or such beauty. Two and two,
(The richest tapestry unrolled before them)
First came the Brides in all their loveliness ;

Each in her veil, and by two bride-maids followed,
Only less lovely, who behind her bore
The precious caskets that within contained
The dowry and the presents. On she moved,
Her eyes cast down, and holding in her hand
A fan, that gently waved, of ostrich feathers.
Her veil, transparent as the gossamer,^{hh}
Fell from beneath a starry diadem ;
And on her dazzling neck a jewel shone,
Ruby or diamond or dark amethyst ;
A jewelled chain, in many a winding wreath,
Wreathing her gold brocade.

Before the Church,
That venerable Pile on the sea-brink, ⁱⁱ

Another train they met, no strangers to them,
Brothers to some and to the rest still dearer ;
Each in his hand bearing his cap and plume,
And, as he walked, with modest dignity
Folding his scarlet mantle, his tabarro.

They join, they enter in, and, up the aisle
Led by the full-voiced choir in bright procession,
Range round the altar. In his vestments there
The Patriarch stands ; and, while the anthem flows,
Who can look on unmoved — mothers in secret
Rejoicing in the beauty of their daughters,
Sons in the thought of making them their own ;
And they — arrayed in youth and innocence,
Their beauty heightened by their hopes and fears.

At length the rite is ending. All fall down
In earnest prayer, all of all ranks together ;
And, stretching out his hands, the holy man
Proceeds to give the general benediction ;
When hark, a din of voices from without,
And shrieks and groans and outcries as in battle ;
And lo, the door is burst, the curtain rent,
And armed ruffians, robbers from the deep,
Savage, uncouth, led on by Barbarigo,
And his six brothers in their coats of steel,
Are standing on the threshold ! Statue-like,
Awhile they gaze on the fallen multitude,
Each with his sabre up, in act to strike ;
Then, as at once recovering from the spell,
Rush forward to the altar, and as soon

Are gone again — amid no clash of arms
Bearing away the maidens and the treasures.

Where are they now? — ploughing the distant waves,
Their sails all set, and they upon the deck
Standing triumphant. To the East they go,
Steering for Istria; their accursed barks
(Well are they known, the galliot and the galley,)
Freighted with all that gives to life its value!
The richest argosies are poor to them!

Now might you see the matrons running wild
Along the beach; the men half armed and arming,
One with a shield, one with a casque and spear;
One with an axe hewing the mooring-chain

Of some old pinnace. Not a raft, a plank,
But on that day was drifting. In an hour
Half Venice was afloat. But long before,
Frantic with grief and scorning all controul,
The Youths were gone in a light brigantine
Lying at anchor near the Arsenal;
Each having sworn, and by the holy rood,
To slay or to be slain.

And from the tower

The watchman gives the signal. In the East
A ship is seen, and making for the Port,
Be what she may. — And now she turns the point,
Over the waters like a sea-bird flying !
Ha, 'tis the same, 'tis theirs ! From stern to prow

Hung with green boughs, she comes — she comes,
restoring

All that was lost.

Coasting, with narrow search,
Friuli — like a tyger in his spring
They had surprised the Corsairs where they lay
Sharing the spoil in blind security
And casting lots — had slain them, one and all,
All to the last, and flung them far and wide
Into the sea, their proper element ;
Him first, as first in rank, whose name so long
Had hushed the babes of Venice, and who yet,
Breathing a little, in his look retained
The fierceness of his soul.

Thus were the Brides
Lost and recovered ; and what now remained
But to give Thanks ? Twelve breast-plates and twelve
crowns,
Flaming with gems and gold, the votive offerings
Of the young victors to their Patron-Saint,
Vowed on the field of battle, were ere-long
Laid at his feet ^{kk} ; and to preserve for ever
The memory of a day so full of change,
From joy to grief, from grief to joy again,
Through many an age, as oft as it came round,
'Twas held religiously with all observance.
The Doge resigned his crimson for pure ermine ;
And through the city in a stately barge
Of gold, were borne with songs and symphonies,

Twelve ladies young and noble. Clad they were
In bridal white with bridal ornaments,
Each in her glittering veil; and on the deck,
As on a burnished throne, they glided by;
No window or balcony but adorned
With hangings of rich texture, not a roof
But covered with beholders, and the air
Vocal with joy. Onward they went, the oars
Moving in concert with the harmony,
Thro' the Rialto to the Ducal Palace,
And at a banquet there, served with due honor,
Sate representing, in the eyes of all,
Eyes not unwet, I ween, with grateful tears,
Their lovely ancestors, the Brides of Venice.

XIV.

FOSCARI.

LET us lift up the curtain, and observe
What passes in that chamber. Now a sigh,
And now a groan is heard. Then all is still.
Twenty are sitting as in judgment there;
Men who have served their country, and grown grey
In governments and distant embassies,
Men eminent alike in war and peace;
Such as in effigy shall long adorn

The walls of Venice — to shew what she has been !
Their garb is black, and black the arras is,
And sad the general aspect. Yet their looks
Are calm, are cheerful ; nothing there like grief,
Nothing or harsh, or cruel. Still that noise,
That low and dismal moaning.

Half withdrawn,

A little to the left, sits one in crimson,
A venerable man, fourscore and upward.
Cold drops of sweat stand on his furrowed brow.
His hands are clenched ; his eyes half shut and glazed ;
His shrunk and withered limbs rigid as marble.
'Tis Foscari, the Doge. And there is one,
A young man, lying at his feet, stretched out

In torture. 'Tis his son, his only one ;
'Tis Giacomo, the blessing of his age,
(Say, has he lived for this?) accused of murder,
The murder of the Senator Donato.
Last night the proofs, if proofs they are, were dropt
Into the lion's mouth, the mouth of brass,
That gapes and gorges ; and the Doge himself,
('Tis not the first time he has filled this office,)
Must sit and look on a beloved Son
Suffering the Question.

Twice, to die in peace,
To save a falling house, and turn the hearts
Of his fell Adversaries, those who now,
Like hell-hounds in full cry, are running down

His last of four, twice did he ask their leave
To lay aside the Crown, and they refused him,
An oath exacting, never more to ask it ;
And there he sits, a spectacle of woe,
By them, his rivals in the State, compelled,
Such the refinement of their cruelty,
To keep the place he sighed for.

Once again
The screw is turned ; and, as it turns, the Son
Looks up, and in a faint and broken accent,
Murmurs “ My Father ! ” The old man shrinks back,
And in his mantle muffles up his face.
“ Art thou not guilty ? ” says a voice, that once
Would greet the Sufferer long before they met,

And on his ear strike like a pleasant music,
“ Art thou not guilty ? ” — “ No ! Indeed I am not ! ”
But all is unavailing. In that Court
Groans are confessions ; Patience, Fortitude,
The work of Magic ; and, released, upheld,
For Condemnation, from his Father’s lips
He hears the sentence, “ Banishment to Candia.
Death if he leaves it.”

And the bark sets sail ;
And he is gone from all he loves — for ever !
His wife, his boys, and his disconsolate parents !
Gone in the night — unseen, alas, of any —
Without a word, a look of tenderness,

To be called up, when, in his lonely hours
He would indulge in weeping.

Like a ghost,
Day after day, year after year, he haunts
An ancient rampart, that o'erhangs the sea;
Gazing on vacancy, and hourly starting
To answer to the watch.

But lo, at last,
Messengers come. He is recalled : his heart
Leaps at the tidings. He embarks : the boat
Springs to the oar, and back again he goes,
Into that very Chamber ! there to lie
In his old resting-place, the bed of torture ;

And thence look up (Five long, long years of Grief
Have not killed either) on his wretched Sire,
Still in that seat — as though he had not left it,
Immovable, enveloped in his mantle.

But now he comes, convicted of a crime
Great by the laws of Venice. Night and day,
Brooding on what he had been, what he was,
'Twas more than he could bear. His longing-fits
Thickened upon him. His desire for home
Became a madness ; and, resolved to go,
If but to die, in his despair he writes
A letter to Francesco, Duke of Milan,
Soliciting his influence with the State,
And drops it to be found. — “ Would ye know all ?

I have transgressed, offended wilfully ;
And am prepared to suffer as I ought.
But let me, let me, if but for an instant,
Ye must consent — for all of you are sons,
Most of you husbands, fathers, let me first
Indulge the natural feelings of a man,
And, ere I die, if such my sentence be,
Press to my heart ('tis all I ask of you)
My wife, my children — and my aged mother —
Say, is she yet alive ?”

He is condemned
To go ere set of sun, go whence he came,
A banished man — and for a year to breathe

The vapour of a dungeon. — But his prayer
(What could they less?) is granted.

In a hall

Open and crowded by the common rabble,
'Twas there a trembling Wife and her four sons
Yet young, a Mother, borne along, bed-ridden,
And an old Doge, mustering up all his strength,
That strength how small, assembled now to meet
One so long lost, long mourned, one who for them
Had braved so much — death, and yet worse than
death —

To meet him and to part with him for ever !

Time and their heavy wrongs had changed them all ;

Him most ! Yet when the Wife, the Mother looked
Again, 'twas he himself, 'twas Giacomo,
Their only hope, and trust, and consolation !
And all clung round him, weeping bitterly ;
Weeping the more, because they wept in vain.

Unnerved, unsettled in his mind from long
And exquisite pain, he sobs aloud and cries,
Kissing the old Man's cheek, " Help me, my Father !
Let me, I pray thee, live once more among you :
Let me go home."—" My Son," returns the Doge,
Mastering awhile his grief, " if I may still
Call thee my Son, if thou art innocent,
As I would fain believe," but, as he speaks,
He falls, " submit without a murmur."

Night,

That to the World brought revelry, to them
Brought only food for sorrow. Giacomo
Embarked — to die; sent to an early grave
For thee, Erizzo, whose death-bed confession,
“ He is most innocent ! ’Twas I who did it ! ”
Came when he slept in peace. The ship, that sailed
Swift as the winds with his recall to Honour,
Bore back a lifeless corse. Generous as brave,
Affection, kindness, the sweet offices
Of Love and Duty were to him as needful
As was his daily bread ; — and to become
A by-word in the meanest mouths of Venice,
Bringing a stain on those who gave him life,
On those, alas, now worse than fatherless —

To be proclaimed a ruffian, a night-stabber,
He on whom none before had breathed reproach —
He lived but to disprove it. That hope lost,
Death followed. From the hour he went, he spoke not ;
And in his dungeon, when he laid him down,
He sunk to rise no more. Oh, if there be
Justice in Heaven, and we are assured there is,
A day must come of ample Retribution !

Then was thy cup, old Man, full to o'erflowing.
But thou wast yet alive ; and there was one,
The soul and spring of all that Enmity,
Who would not leave thee ; fastening on thy flank
Hungering and thirsting, still unsatisfied,
One of a name illustrious as thine own :

One of the Ten ! one of the Invisible Three !

'Twas Loredano.

When the whelps were gone,

He would dislodge the Lion from his den ;

And, leading on the pack he long had led,

The miserable pack that ever howled

Against fallen Greatness, moved that Foscari

Be Doge no longer ; urging his great age,

His incapacity and nothingness ;

Calling a Father's sorrows in his chamber

Neglect of duty, anger, contumacy.

“ I am most willing to retire,” says Foscari :

“ But I have sworn, and cannot of myself.

Do with me as ye please.”

He was deposed,
He, who had reigned so long and gloriously ;
His ducal bonnet taken from his brow,
His robes stript off, his ring, that ancient symbol,
Broken before him. But now nothing moved
The meekness of his soul. All things alike !
Among the six that came with the decree,
Foscari saw one he knew not, and enquired
His name. “ I am the son of Marco Memmo.”
“ Ah,” he replied, “ thy father was my friend.”

And now he goes. “ It is the hour and past.
I have no business here.”—“ But wilt thou not
Avoid the gazing crowd ? That way is private.”
“ No ! as I entered, so will I retire.”

And, leaning on his staff, he left the Palace,
His residence for four and thirty years,
By the same staircase he came up in splendour,
The staircase of the Giants. Turning round,
When in the court below, he stopt and said,
“ My merits brought me hither. I depart,
Driven by the malice of my Enemies.”
Then through the crowd withdrew, poor as he came,
And in his gondola went off, unfollowed
But by the sighs of them that dared not speak.

This journey was his last. When the bell rung,
Next day, announcing a new Doge to Venice,
It rung his knell.

But whence the deadly hate
That caused all this — the hate of Loredano?
It was a legacy his Father left him,
Who, but for Foscari, had reigned in Venice,
And, like the venom in the serpent's bag,
Gathered and grew ! Nothing but turned to venom !
In vain did Foscari sue for peace, for friendship,
Offering in marriage his fair Isabel.
He changed not ; with a dreadful piety,
Studying revenge ; listening alone to those
Who talked of vengeance ; grasping by the hand
Those in their zeal (and none, alas, were wanting)
Who came to tell him of another Wrong,
Done or imagined. When his father died,
'Twas whispered in his ear, " He died by poison !"

He wrote it on the tomb ('tis there in marble)
And in his ledger-book — among his debtors —
Entered the name, “ Francesco Foscari.”
And added “ For the murder of my Father.”
Leaving a blank — to be filled up hereafter.
When Foscari's noble heart at length gave way,
He took the volume from the shelf again
Calmly, and with his pen filled up the blank,
Inscribing, “ He has paid me.”



XV.

ARQUA.

THERE is, within three leagues and less of Padua,
(The Paduan student knows it, honours it)
A lonely tomb-stone in a mountain-churchyard;
And I arrived there as the sun declined
Low in the west. The gentle airs, that breathe
Fragrance at eve, were rising, and the birds
Singing their farewell-song — the very song
They sung the night that tomb received a tenant;

When, as alive, clothed in his Canon's habit,
And, slowly winding down the narrow path,
He came to rest there. Nobles of the land,
Princes and prelates mingled in his train,
Anxious by any act, while yet they could,
To catch a ray of glory by reflection ;
And from that hour have kindred spirits flocked
From distant countries, from the north, the south,
To see where he is laid.

Twelve years ago,
When I descended the impetuous Rhone,
Its vineyards of such great and old renown,¹¹
Its castles, each with some romantic tale,
Vanishing fast — the pilot at the stern,

He who had steered so long, standing aloft,
His eyes on the white breakers, and his hands
On what at once served him for oar and rudder,
A huge misshapen plank — the bark itself
Frail and uncouth, launched to return no more,
Such as a shipwrecked man might hope to build,
Urged by the love of home — when I descended
Two long, long days, silence, suspense on board,
It was to offer at thy fount, Valclusa,
Entering the arched Cave, to wander where
Petrarch had wandered, in a trance to sit
Where in his peasant-dress he loved to sit,
Musing, reciting — on some rock moss-grown,
Or the fantastic root of some old fig-tree,
That drinks the living waters as they stream

Over their emerald-bed ; and could I now
Neglect to visit Arqua ; where, at last,
When he had done and settled with the world,
When all the illusions of his Youth were fled,
Indulged perhaps too long, cherished too fondly,
He came for the conclusion ? Half-way up
He built his house, whence as by stealth he caught,
Among the hills, a glimpse of busy life,
That soothed, not stirred. — But knock, and enter in.
This was his chamber. 'Tis as when he left it;
As if he now were busy in his garden.
And this his closet. Here he sate and read.
This was his chair ; and in it, unobserved,
Reading or thinking of his absent friends,
He passed away as in a quiet slumber.

Peace to this region ! Peace to those who dwell here !
They know his value — every coming step,
That gathers round the children from their play,
Would tell them if they knew not. — But could aught,
Ungentle or ungenerous, spring up
Where he is sleeping ; where, and in an age
Of savage warfare and blind bigotry,
He cultured all that could refine, exalt ;^{mm}
Leading to better things ?



XVI.

GINEVRA.

IF ever you should come to Modena,
(Where among other relics you may see
Tassoni's bucket — but 'tis not the true one)
Stop at a Palace near the Reggio-gate,
Dwelt in of old by one of the Donati.
Its noble gardens, terrace above terrace,
And rich in fountains, statues, cypresses,
Will long detain you — but, before you go,

Enter the house — forget it not, I pray you —
And look awhile upon a picture there.

'Tis of a Lady in her earliest youth,
The last of that illustrious family;
Done by Zampieri — but by whom I care not.
He, who observes it — ere he passes on,
Gazes his fill, and comes and comes again,
That he may call it up, when far away.

She sits, inclining forward as to speak,
Her lips half open, and her finger up,
As tho' she said "Beware!" her vest of gold
Broidered with flowers and clasped from head to foot,
An emerald-stone in every golden clasp;

And on her brow, fairer than alabaster,
A coronet of pearls.

But then her face,
So lovely, yet so arch, so full of mirth,
The overflowings of an innocent heart —
It haunts me still, tho' many a year has fled,
Like some wild melody !

Alone it hangs
Over a mouldering heir-loom, its companion,
An oaken-chest, half-eaten by the worm,
But richly carved by Antony of Trent
With scripture-stories from the Life of Christ ;
A chest that came from Venice and had held

The ducal robes of some old Ancestor —
That by the way — it may be true or false —
But don't forget the picture; and you will not,
When you have heard the tale they told me there.

She was an only child — her name Ginevra,
The joy, the pride of an indulgent Father;
And in her fifteenth year became a bride,
Marrying an only son, Francesco Doria,
Her playmate from her birth, and her first love.

Just as she looks there in her bridal dress,
She was all gentleness, all gaiety,
Her pranks the favourite theme of every tongue.
But now the day was come, the day, the hour;

Now, frowning, smiling for the hundredth time,
The nurse, that ancient lady, preached decorum ;
And, in the lustre of her youth, she gave
Her hand, with her heart in it, to Francesco.

Great was the joy ; but at the Nuptial feast,
When all sate down, the Bride herself was wanting.
Nor was she to be found ! Her Father cried,
“ ’Tis but to make a trial of our love ! ”
And filled his glass to all ; but his hand shook,
And soon from guest to guest the panic spread.
’Twas but that instant she had left Francesco,
Laughing and looking back and flying still,
Her ivory tooth imprinted on his finger.
But now, alas, she was not to be found ;

That mouldering chest was noticed ; and 'twas said
By one as young, as thoughtless as Ginevra,
“ Why not remove it from its lurking-place ? ”
'Twas done as soon as said ; but on the way
It burst, it fell ; and lo, a skeleton,
With here and there a pearl, an emerald-stone,
A golden clasp, clasping a shred of gold.
All else had perished — save a wedding-ring,
And a small seal, her mother's legacy,
Engraven with a name, the name of both,
“ Ginevra.”

There then had she found a grave !
Within that chest had she concealed herself,

Fluttering with joy, the happiest of the happy ;
When a spring-lock, that lay in ambush there,
Fastened her down for ever !

XVII.

FLORENCE.

OF all the fairest Cities of the Earth
None are so fair as Florence. 'Tis a gem
Of purest ray, a treasure for a casket !
And what a glorious lustre did it shed,
When it emerged from darkness ! Search within,
Without ; all is enchantment ! 'Tis the Past
Contending with the Present ; and in turn
Each has the mastery.

In this chapel wrought ^{na}
Masaccio; and he slumbers underneath.
Wouldst thou behold his monument? Look round!
And know that where we stand, stood oft and long,
Oft till the day was gone, Raphael himself,
He and his haughty Rival — patiently,
Humbly, to learn of those who came before,
To steal a spark from their authentick fire,
Theirs, who first broke the gloom, Sons of the Morning.

There, on the seat that runs along the wall,
South of the Church, east of the belfry-tower,
Thou canst not miss it — in the sultry time
Would Dante sit conversing ^{oo}, and with those
Who little thought that in his hand he held

The balance, and assigned at his good pleasure
To each his place in the invisible world,
To some an upper, some a lower region;
Reserving in his secret mind a niche
For thee, Saltrello, who with quirks of law
Hadst plagued him sore, and carefully requiting
Such as ere-long condemned his mortal part
To fire. ^{pp} Sit down awhile — then by the gates
Wondrously wrought, so beautiful, so glorious,
That they might serve to be the gates of Heaven,
Enter the Baptistery. That place he loved;
Calling it his! And in his visits there
Well might he take delight! For when a child,
Playing, with venturous feet, near and yet nearer
One of the fonts, fell in, he flew and saved him, ^{qq}

Flew with an energy, a violence,
That broke the marble — a mishap ascribed
To evil motives ; his, alas, to lead
A life of trouble, and ere-long to leave
All things most dear to him, ere-long to know
How salt another's bread is, and how toilsome
The going up and down another's stairs.

Nor then forget that Chamber of the Dead,¹⁷
Where the gigantic forms of Night and Day,
Turned into stone, rest everlastingly ;
Yet still are breathing, and shed round at noon
A two-fold influence — only to be felt —
A light, a darkness, mingling each with each ;
Both and yet neither. There, from age to age,

Two Ghosts are sitting on their sepulchres.

That is the Duke Lorenzo. Mark him well.^{ss}

He meditates, his head upon his hand.

What scowls beneath his broad and helm-like bonnet?

Is it a face, or but an eyeless scull?

'Tis hid in shade; yet, like the basilisk,

It fascinates, and is intolerable.

His mien is noble, most majestic !

Then most so, when the distant choir is heard,

At morn or eve — nor fail thou to attend

On that thrice-hallowed day, when all are there ; “

When all, propitiating with solemn songs,

With light, and frankincense, and holy water,

Visit the Dead. Then wilt thou feel his Power !

But let not Sculpture, Painting, Poesy,
Or They, the Masters of those mighty Spells,
Detain us. Our first homage is to Virtue.
Where, in what dungeon of the Citadel,
(It must be known — the writing on the wall un
Cannot be gone — 'twas cut in with his dagger,
Ere, on his knees to God, he slew himself,)
Where, in what dungeon, did Filippo Strozzi,
The last, the greatest of the Men of Florence,
Breathe out his soul — lest in his agony,
When on the rack and called upon to answer,
He might accuse the Guiltless.

That debt paid,
But with a sigh, a tear for human frailty,

We may return, and once more give a loose
To the delighted spirit — worshipping,
In her small temple of rich workmanship, ^{xx}
Venus herself, who, when she left the skies,
Came hither.



XVIII.

DON GARZÌA.

AMONG the awful forms that stand assembled
In the great square of Florence, may be seen
That Cosmo, not the Father of his Country,
Not he so styled, but he who played the Tyrant.
Clad in rich armour like a Paladin,
But with his helmet off — in kingly state,
Aloft he sits upon his horse of brass;
And they, who read the legend underneath,

Go and pronounce him happy. Yet there is
A chamber at Grosseto, that, if walls
Could speak and tell of what is done within,
Would turn your admiration into pity.
Half of what passed, died with him ; but the rest,
All he discovered when the fit was on,
All that, by those who listened, could be gleaned
From broken sentences and starts in sleep,
Is told and by an honest chronicler. yy

Two of his sons, Giovanni and Garzia,
(The eldest had not seen his sixteenth summer)
Went to the chase ; but one of them, Giovanni,
His best beloved, the glory of his House,
Returned not ; and at close of day was found

Bathed in his innocent blood. Too well, alas,
The trembling Cosmo guessed the deed, the doer;
And, having caused the body to be borne
In secret to that Chamber — at an hour
When all slept sound, save the disconsolate Mother,
Who little thought of what was yet to come,
And lived but to be told — he bade Garzia
Arise and follow him. Holding in one hand
A winking lamp, and in the other a key
Massive and dungeon-like, thither he led;
And, having entered in and locked the door,
The father fixed his eyes upon the son,
And closely questioned him. No change betrayed
Or guilt or fear. Then Cosmo lifted up
The bloody sheet. “Look there! Look there!” he cried.

“ Blood calls for blood — and from a father’s hand !
— Unless thyself wilt save him that sad office.

What !” he exclaimed, when, shuddering at the sight,

The boy breathed out, “ I stood but on my guard.”

“ Dar’st thou then blacken one who never wronged thee,

Who would not set his foot upon a worm ? —

Yes, thou must die, lest others fall by thee,

And thou shouldst be the slayer of us all.”

Then from Garzia’s side he took the dagger,

That fatal one which spilt his brother’s blood ;

And, kneeling on the ground, “ Great God !” he cried,

“ Grant me the strength to do an act of Justice.

Thou knowest what it costs me ; but, alas,

How can I spare myself, sparing none else ?

Grant me the strength, the will — and oh forgive

The sinful soul of a most wretched son.

'Tis a most wretched father who implores it."

Long on Garzia's neck he hung, and wept

Tenderly, long pressed him to his bosom;

And then, but while he held him by the arm,

Thrusting him backward, turned away his face,

And stabbed him to the heart.

Well might De Thou,

When in his youth he came to Cosmo's court,

Think on the Past; and, as he wandered through

The Ancient Palace^{zz} — through those ample spaces

Silent, deserted — stop awhile to dwell

Upon two portraits there, drawn on the wall^{aaa}

Together, as of two in bonds of love,

One in a Cardinal's habit, one in black,
Those of the unhappy brothers, and infer
From the deep silence that his questions drew,
The terrible truth.

Well might he heave a sigh
For poor humanity, when he beheld
That very Cosmo shaking o'er his fire,
Drowsy and deaf and inarticulate,
Wrapt in his night-gown, o'er a sick-man's mess,
In the last stage — death-struck and deadly pale;
His wife, another, not his Eleanora,
At once his nurse and his interpreter.

NOTES.



NOTES.

NOTE a. Page 7. line 4.

As on that Sabbath-eve to young Rousseau,

Les Confessions. L. 1.

NOTE b. Page 8. line 13.

..... *like him of old,*

The Abbot of Clairvaux. "To admire or despise St. Bernard as he ought," says Gibbon, "the reader like myself should have before the windows of his library, that incomparable landskip."

NOTE c. Page 9. line 2.

That winds beside the mirror of all beauty,

There is no describing in words ; but the following lines were written on the spot, and may serve perhaps to recall to some of my readers what they have seen in this enchanting country.

I love to watch in silence till the Sun
Sets ; and MONT BLANC, arrayed in crimson and
gold,
Flings his broad shadow half across the Lake ;
That shadow, tho' it comes thro' pathless tracts
Of Ether, and o'er Alp and desert drear,
Only less bright, less glorious than himself.
But, while we gaze, 'tis gone ! And now he shines
Like burnished silver ; all, below, the Night's. —

Such moments are most precious. Yet there are
Others, that follow them, to me still more so ;
When once again he changes, once again
Clothing himself in grandeur all his own ;
When, like a Ghost, shadowless, colourless,

He melts away into the Heaven of Heavens ;
Himself alone revealed, all lesser things
As tho' they were not !

NOTE d. Page 10. line 9.

..... *to a rock so small*

St. Helena.

NOTE e. Page 11. line 5.

I entered where a key unlocks a kingdom,

St. Maurice.

NOTE f. Page 13. line 8.

Two dogs of grave demeanour welcomed me ;

Berri, so remarkable for his sagacity, was dead.
His skin is stuffed, and is preserved in the Museum
of Berne.

NOTE g. Page 17. line 1.

But the Bise blew cold ;

The north-east wind. This description was written in June, 1816.

NOTE h. Page 26. line 7.

In many a chalet round the Peak of Terror.

The Schreckhorn.

NOTE i. Page 27. line 9.

..... nor long before,

M. Ebel mentions an escape almost as miraculous.

L'an 1790, le nommé Christian Boren, propriétaire de l'auberge du Grindelwald, eut le malheur de se jeter dans une fente du glacier, en le traversant avec un troupeau de moutons qu'il ramenoit des pâturages de Bäniseck. Heureusement qu'il tomba dans le voisinage du grand torrent qui

coule dans l'intérieur, il en suivit le lit par-dessous les voûtes de glace, et arriva au pied du glacier avec un bras cassé. Cet homme est actuellement encore en vie."

/ *Manuel du Voyageur. Art. Grindelwald.*

NOTE k. Page 35. line 2.

Discovered many a variegated moss

Lychen Geograph.

NOTE l. Page 36. line 7.

..... a wondrous monument,

Almost every mountain of any rank or condition has such a bridge. The most celebrated in this country is on the Swiss-side of St. Gothard.

K 4

*. a "Soots-bridge" Two main
trains of that name.

NOTE m. Page 45. line 1.

..... *just where the abbot fell,*

Ou il y a environ dix ans, que l'Abbé de St. Maurice, Mons. Cocatrix, a été précipité avec sa voiture, ses chevaux, sa cuisinière, et son cocher.

Descript. du Valais, p. 120.

NOTE n. Page 52. line 15.

Painted by Cagliari;

Commonly called Paul Veronese.

NOTE o. Page 53. line 2.

..... *quaffing gramolata,*

A sherbet half-frozen.

NOTE p. Page 53. line 7.

When, lit by lucciole, ...

The fire-flies of Italy.

NOTE q. Page 57. line 6.

Crossing the rough Benacus.

Lago di Garda.

NOTE r. Page 57. line 9.

Like him, who in the days of minstrelsy,

Petrarch. Epist. Rer. Sen. l. v. ep. 3.

NOTE s. Page 58. line 4.

An eagle on a ladder,

The arms of the Scaliger princes.

NOTE t. Page 58. line 7.

Before the great Mastino

Mastino de la Scala, the Lord of Verona. Cortusio, the ambassador and historian, saw him so surrounded. L. 6.

This house had been always open to the unfortunate. In the days of Can Grande all were welcome; Poets, Philosophers, Artists, Warriors. Each had his apartment, each a separate table; and at the hour of dinner musicians and jesters went from room to room. Dante, as we learn from himself, found an asylum there.

NOTE u. Page 64. line 3.

Still glowing with the richest hues of art,

Several were painted by Giorgione and Titian; as for instance, those of the Fondaco de' Tedeschi and the Ca' Grimani. See Vasari.

NOTE x. Page 64. line 8.

..... *the tower of Ezzelino* —

Ezzelino is seen by Dante in the river of blood.

Inferno, xii.

On the wall there is a long inscription : “ *Piis carcerem adspergite lacrymis,*” &c.

NOTE y. Page 65. line 11.

The lagging mules

The passage-boats are drawn up and down the Brenta.

NOTE z. Page 66. line 4.

..... *from him whose boast it was,*

Attila.

NOTE aa. Page 67. line 5.

Ere yet the Cafila came

A Caravan.

NOTE bb. Page 68. line 2.

Making the Imperial City of the East,

Constantinople.

NOTE cc. Page 74. line 3.

..... twelve Procurators.

The Procuratorship of St. Mark was the second dignity in the Republic.

NOTE dd. Page 81. line 12.

..... *resounding with their feet,*

See Petrarch's description of them, and of the tournament. Rer. Senil. l. 4. ep. 2.

NOTE ee. Page 83. line 10.

*Down which the grizzly head of old Faliero
Rolled from the block.*

Of him and his conspiracy I had given a brief account; but he is now universally known through a Writer, whose poetical talents command as much the admiration of other countries as of his own.

NOTE ff. Page 86. line 10.

And bore away to the canal Orfano,

A deep channel behind the island of S. Giorgio Maggiore.

NOTE gg. Page 89. line 1.

It was St. Mary's eve.....

This circumstance took place at Venice on the first of February, the eve of the feast of the Purification of the Virgin, A. D. 944, Pietro Candiano, Doge.

NOTE hh. Page 91. line 7.

Her veil, transparent as the gossamer,

Among the *Habiti Antichi*, in that admirable book of wood-cuts ascribed to Titian, (A. D. 1590,) there is one entitled *Sposa Venetiana a Castello*. It was taken from an old painting in the *Scuola di S. Giovanni Evangelista*, and by the Writer is believed to represent one of the Brides here described.

NOTE ii. Page 91. line 14.

That venerable pile on the sea-brink,

San Pietro di Castello, the Patriarchal Church of
Venice.

NOTE kk. Page 97. line 7.

Laid at his feet

They were to be seen in the Treasury of St. Mark
very lately.

NOTE ll. Page 118. line 12.

Its vineyards of such great and old renown,

The Côte Rotie, the Hermitage, &c.

NOTE mm. Page 121. line 8.

He cultured all that could refine, exalt ;

See an Essay on his Life and Character, lately written by a Man no less eminent for his learning than his genius, Ugo Foscolo.

NOTE nn. Page 132. line 1.

In this chapel wrought

A chapel of the Holy Virgin in the church of the Carmelites. It is adorned with his paintings; and all the great artists of Florence studied there; Lionardo da Vinci, Fra Bartolomeo, Andrea del Sarto, Michael Angelo, Raphael, &c.

Se alcun cercasse il marmo o il nome mio,
La Chiesa è il marmo, una cappella è il nome.

It was there that Michael Angelo received the blow on his nose. — See Vasari and Cellini.

NOTE oo. Page 132. line 13.

Would Dante sit conversing,

A tradition.

NOTE pp. Page 133. line 8.

..... condemned his mortal part
To fire.

In 1302, he was sentenced, if taken, to be
burned.

NOTE qq. Page 133. line 15.

..... he flew and saved him,

Inferno, xix.

NOTE rr. Page 134. line 8.

Nor then forget that Chamber of the Dead,

The Chapel de Depositi; in which are the tombs of the Medici, by Michael Angelo.

NOTE ss. Page 135. line 2.

That is the Duke Lorenzo. Mark him well.

He died early; living only to become the father of Catherine de Medicis. Had an Evil Spirit assumed the human shape to propagate mischief, he could not have done better.

NOTE tt. Page 135. line 11.

..... when all are there;

Il Giorno dei Morti.

NOTE uu. Page 136. line 15.

It must be known — the writing on the wall

Exoriare aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor !

Perhaps there is nothing in language more affecting than his last testament. It is addressed "To God, the Deliverer," and was found steeped in his blood.

NOTE xx. Page 137. line 3.

In her small temple of rich workmanship,

The Tribune.

NOTE yy. Page 140. line 9.

Is told and by an honest chronicler.

De Thou. Alfieri has written a tragedy on the subject; if it may be said so, when he has altered so entirely the story and the characters.

NOTE zz. Page 143. line 11.

The Ancient Palace —

The Palazzo Vecchio. Cosmo had left it several years before.

NOTE aaa. Page 143. line 13.

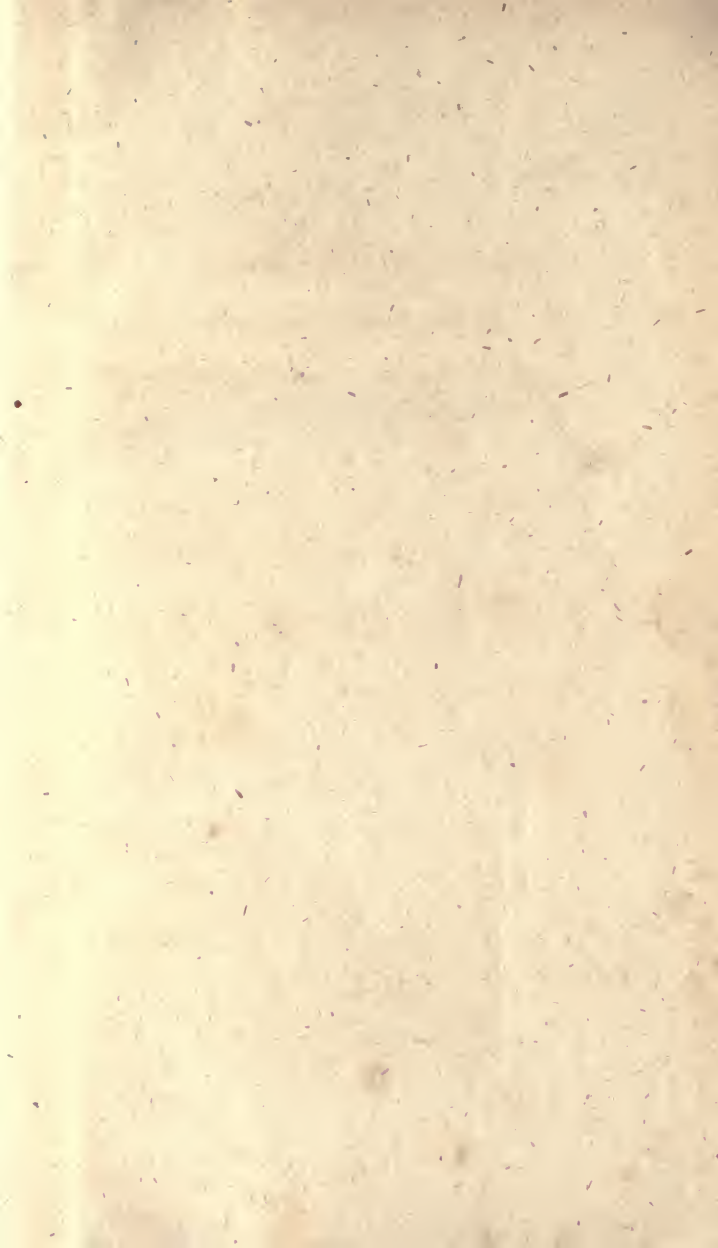
..... *drawn on the wall*

By Vasari.

THE END.

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